DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 421 372 SO 028 002

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TITLE The Ties That Bind: What Is Cultural Identity? Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminars Abroad 1966 (India).
SPONS AGENCY United States Educational Foundation in India.
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 25p.; For other documents in the 1996 Program, see SO 027 999-028 007.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Asian Studies; *Cultural Differences; Cultural Influences; Cultural Pluralism; Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; Global Education; Grade 6; Grade 7; Grade 8; *Indians; Instructional Materials; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; *Multicultural Education; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS *India

ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit was developed to assist middle-school students in understanding diversity in race, religion and culture present in India. Sections of the guide include: (1) "Assessment," which discusses Indian culture; (2) "The Culture of the Monsoon"; (3) "Musical Culture"; (4) "Systemic Culture"; (5) "The Culture of Stories"; (6) "The Culture of Cuisine"; and (7) "The Culture of Appearance." The guide also provides a list of multiple abilities used in this unit (EH)

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ED 421 372

The Ties that Bind.
What is Cultural Identify?

by

Kim Roen

A Curriculum Project Developed During the 1996
Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad Program: India Seminar

Submitted to
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), USDE

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United States Educational Foundation in India

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Rosalie Gendimenico

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The United States Educational Foundation
Attn: O.P. Bhardwaj
"Fulbright House"
12 Hailey Road
New Delhi 110 001 INDIA

Dear O.P,

It is late October and I am finally sitting down to write to you and enclose my project draft. India blows through me like a gust of wind every week or so. Anything can trigger a memory. Sometimes it is the coin you bought us. Sometimes it is a swatch of fabric or a photograph. I miss you and think of you often. I hope you and your family are well.

Enclosed is a first draft of the unit I am writing on India for sixth, seventh and eighth grade. A Complex Instruction unit must go through several phases before it is finished. The most difficult phase is collecting the resources. We stress using primary sources and we must obtain copyright permission for all the sources we use. The unit I have enclosed does not have the resources attached for this reason. I will be sending this draft to Rachel Lotan at Stanford University for her comments. She will then send it around to teachers in different districts who will give further written feedback. I will incorporate the feedback and rewrite the draft. Over the summer, at our annual workshop, I will continue to rework the unit. Eventually, we will pilot the unit next year in several classrooms. Perhaps it will be accepted for publication after the piloting phase. I will send you a second draft in July. I have also enclosed an example of this type of instruction to help explain the concept to anyone interested in this unit.

I held a workshop for my colleagues soon after I got back from India. I believe several people from my District will try to apply for a fellowship next year. It was fun sharing materials and slides. I would also like to recommend the film Phantom India by Louis Malle. It is a 7 part documentary on India which is the next best thing to actually being there.

It is cliche to say that India changes a person, but it is true that my perspective has changed. I feel a deeper connection to the Indian people I know and a strong appreciation for your culture. These changes add a richness to my life and hopefully by extension a richness to my students' lives. I am indebted to the Fulbright program for providing a course replete with depth and sensitivity. I feel very lucky to have had the experience. Please extend my thanks to all of the staff of the program.

Sincerely,

Kim Rosen

The Ties that Bind
What is Cultural Identity?

Zero Activity	**India - The land and her people**. Introduces students to the range of diversity in race, religion, and culture present in India.
Activity One	**The Culture of the Monsoon.** The monsoon is an unique weather phenomenon that binds the people of India together. Students will analyze maps showing the effects of the monsoon. The groups task requires the students to take the information learned and apply it to daily life by creating a "news report."
Activity Two	**Musical Culture.** Introduces students to the elements of Indian music. Engages students in comparing Eastern and Western music.
Activity Three	**Systemic Culture.** Using the caste system as a model, students will explore systems that define cultural identity.
Activity Four	**The Culture of Stories.** Students will examine the role stories play in creating cultural identity. We will look at the Ramayana and compare this story to Western counterparts.
Activity Five	**The Culture of Cuisine.** The age old process of spicing food will be explored. Students will look at the common characteristics of Indian cuisine. The students will be required to create their own recipe using ancient herbal techniques and traditional Indian spices.
Activity Six	**The Culture of Appearance.** Traditional clothing styles are thousands of years old. Students will examine the part clothing plays in creating cultural identity.

Each activity includes and **Individual Report** which gives the teacher the opportunity to evaluate each student's understanding of the activity.

Multiple Abilities

Below is a partial list of multiple abilities used in this unit. Please contribute to the list as you teach this unit.

Visual/Spatial abilities
- interpreting maps
- forming mental images
- drawing images

Understanding and analyzing Primary Source Texts
- empathizing with others
- grasping the message of a text
- translating the message of a text into other forms
- noting details in a picture or resource
- discerning relationships and connections

Dramatic/ Musical Abilities
- using and expressing imagination
- facial and vocal expressions
- using body gestures and movements
- creating music

Logic and Reasoning Abilities
- making a plan
- connecting past and present

Assessment

Sample Assessment:

You have just returned from a trip to India. A friend is planning a trip in the near future. Write a letter to your friend which explains the common qualities that create an "Indian" cultural identity.

Although India is a vast and diverse country of myriad peoples and customs, there are elements of cultural identity that make up a uniquely "Indian" identity. Though the Indian people live in a wide variety of climatic and geographic conditions, the yearly monsoon is a constant. The anticipation of the rains and the relief they bring in fertile soil and cooling temperatures make the monsoons a feature of Indian culture.

The caste system is undergoing change in the modern era, however, the ancient organization continues to shape Indian identity. Even Muslims modify their customs to include this system of labor organization. The caste system sets a tone for how people relate to one another in India. This system parallels the system of Confucian relationships that existed in Ancient China.

The Ramayana binds together the people of India with spiritual stories that create a common code of morality. The imagery and lore of the Ramayana pervades popular culture in the way that Disney and fairy tales do in the United States.

Indian culture has existed between East and West for thousands of years. Despite constant contact with outside invaders and traders, India retains its distinct cultural features. Indian music, cuisine and clothing remain relatively unchanged despite thousands of years of contact with other cultures.Indian music is a melodic rather than an harmonic system. Indian clothes show an unique relationship with climate and history. Indian cuisine shows a deep relationship between the natural environment and the food which Indian people eat.

Activity One
The Culture of the Monsoon

The annual monsoon defines India as no other natural event does.

1. What are some of the unique characteristics of the monsoon rains?

2. Why are the monsoons so important to the people of India?

3. Discuss whether you think natural disasters or weather patterns bind people together. Give examples from your own environment.

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Find a way to communicate the effects of the monsoon rains on the people of India to your classmates.

Activity Two
Musical Culture

"The music of India is perhaps one of the oldest in the world. It is a system of music which is essentially melodic as compared to a European music which has changed into harmonic music."

1. What are the main instruments of classical Indian music?

2. What does a melodic system mean?

3. Compare Indian music to classical Western music. What are some of the differences that you notice?

4. How does music play a part in your culture?

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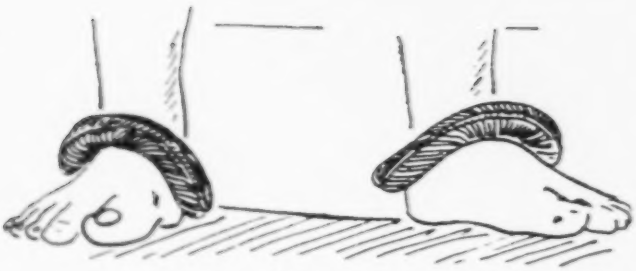
Create two pieces of music that show some of the differences between Indian and Western musical systems.



Pairjan

A very primeval instrument is just a dried fruit with seeds. On shaking it, a rattling sound is produced: common children's toys of this kind are found throughout the country. Such small shells are tied in a garland and round the waist by tribals for their dances: the *gilabada* of the Chenchus of Andhra, for instance. When the dry

Kat chalampu

Gna

Jaltarang

Tabla Bayan

Ghumat

Semmangalam

Manjeera

Elattalam

Jhallari : Konarak, 13 century A.D.

Activity Three
Systemic Culture

"About three thousand years ago India was invaded by the Aryans, a race of light skinned warriors from the Caucasian mountains. These Aryans brought the ideas of the caste system. The Aryan warriors became the Kshatriyas, the priests became the Brahmins and the indigenous people became the Shudras. Later, once trade began to flourish, the merchants became the Vaishyas. To a Hindu, each person's place in the world is determined by their past actions. A Brahmin is a Brahmin as a reward for virtues in a previous life."

1. What is the caste system?

2. What advantages do you see to the system? What disadvantages do you see in the system?

3. How does a system contribute to your cultural identity? Can you give an example of a system that shapes your sense of identity?

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Create a skit that shows the elements of the caste system.

Activity Four
The Culture of Stories

"It is said that during the broadcasts of both serials the Ramayana and the Mahabarata epics, the whole country came to a virtual standstill. Everyone stopped whatever he or she was doing to watch a screen in someone's house or village square.'

1. Ancient tales form all cultures communicate a message to the readers. What messages do you find in this excerpt of the Ramayana?

2. How is the Ramayana similar to or different from the stories from your culture?

3. What can you learn about Indian culture form the Ramayana excerpt?

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Imagine that the ancient epic the Ramayana was part of modern American culture. Find a modern way to express this story.

Activity Five
The Culture of Cuisine

"From childhood onwards, an Indian is exposed to more combinations of flavors and seasonings than perhaps anyone else in the world. Our cuisine is based on this variety, which, in flavors, encompasses hot and sour, hot and nutty, bitter and hot, bitter and sour and sweet and salty. Our spice shelves often contain more than thirty seasonings. The Indian genius lies in squeezing several flavors out of the same spice by roasting it, grinding it or popping it whole into hot oil.

1. What similarities do you see between the three recipes from different regions?

2. Why are spices considered important in Indian culture?

3. What are some of the foods that are considered uniquely "American" or from the United States?

4. Make a list of these uniquely "American" foods and the memories or associations they evoke.

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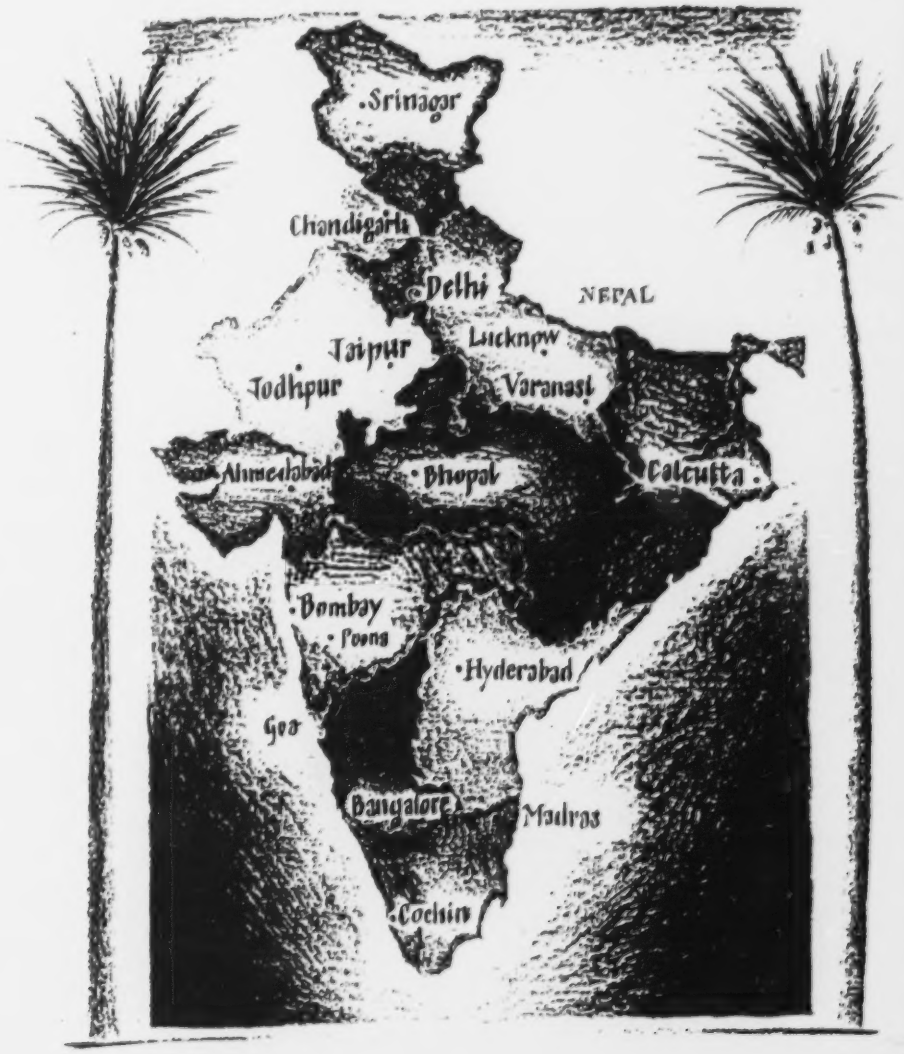
Choose a region of India to highlight. Create your own curry mixture. Find a way to communicate your recipe to your classmates.


Srinagar
Chandigarh
Delhi
NEPAL
Jaipur
Lucknow
Jodhpur
Varanasi
Ahmedabad
Bhopal
Calcutta
Bombay
Poona
Hyderabad
Goa
Bangalore
Madras
Cochin

Ginger (*Adrak*)
Fresh root ginger, a powerfully scented rhizome, is used peeled and chopped finely in a wide variety of Indian recipes.

Mace (*Javitri*)
The membrane surrounding the fruit of the nutmeg tree, stronger in flavour than nutmeg, and used in blade or ground powder form.

Mustard seed (*Rai*)
The small black seeds of the mustard plant are used whole and ground as flavouring in most savoury dishes.

Nutmeg (*Jaiphal*)
This dark brown fruit, a familiar scent in all cooking, with a sweet flavour, is used grated freshly in vegetable and rice dishes.

Paprika (*Deghi Mirch*)
A mild-flavoured red chilli powder, sweet rather than hot and valued for its colouring in Indian cooking.

Poppy seed (*Khas-Khas*)
A white seed, used ground as a thickening agent rather than flavouring, in sauces. The more familiar black poppy seed can also be used.

Red pepper or cayenne (*Lal Mirch*)
A commercial blend of ground sun-dried chilli pods, hot in flavour and an adjunct of other flavourings. Take care in handling, as with all chillis, since it burns the skin.

Saffron (*Kesar*)
Dried stigmas of a form of crocus plant, orange-red in colour are picked for their sweet scent and flavour. Saffron is best bought as threads because saffron powder frequently contains impurities. Expensive but alluring, a very small quantity flavours a meat or rice dish. Soak the threads in a little hot milk to free the colour and scent before adding to dish.

Tamarind (*Imli*)
The pulpy pod, dark brown in colour, of the tamarind tree is preserved and sold commercially in a block like dates. The sour flavour is added to many South India dishes. To use, soak a 50g / 2oz piece of tamarind paste in 250ml / 8fl oz boiling water, then mash it to extract the flavour. Strain the juice and use in cooking, or add the softened paste as directed.

Kari or curry leaves

Turmeric (*Haldi*)
Like ginger, this is a short rhizome which is boiled and powdered and gives an intense yellow colour to vegetable, rice and meat dishes, as well as a strong woody flavour, and mild scent. Turmeric, bought ready ground, is the most important spice in Indian vegetarian food.

Cinnamon

some of the following recipes. Each spice adds an individual touch to a finished dish but it is a pity not to try a particular recipe because one more rare and optional flavouring such as asafetida is not to hand.

Very little can be achieved without access to garlic, fresh root ginger and fresh green chillies, but items can be added to the spice cupboard gradually. Nutmeg, mace, cloves and cinnamon are all familiar to most cooks and after that cumin, coriander, turmeric, cardomom and cayenne pepper are the most essential. If you can find fresh coriander, the Indian equivalent of parsley in many recipes, their fragrant leaves are the authentic finishing touch to many dishes.

The Spice Cupboard

Asafoetida (*Heeng*)
A resin, usually used in a pea-sized quantity, can be ground and used instead of onion in some recipes.

Cardamom (*Elaichi*)
Pods, black or green, which contain fragrant seeds, used extensively in meat, rice and desserts whole or ground. The seeds are extracted and ground, or more usually the whole pod is ground to produce a mild fragrance and flavour.

Carom (*Ajwain*)
Seeds with a sharp flavour added to vegetable dishes and breads, but to be used in moderation.

Cinnamon (*Dalchini*)
The bark of the cassia tree, or the smoother bark of the cinnamon tree are both used as a flavouring whole or in powder form to add to many dishes, including Moghul rice.

Red pepper

Clove (*Laung*)
A dried bud, with powerful flavour and scent, used whole or ground in rice dishes and sauces.

Coriander (*Dhania*)
Both the seeds and the leaves of this essential plant are used. The strong scent and sweet flavour of the seeds used whole or ground, supply one of the most important of all spices in Indian cooking. Coriander is also a fresh herb used extensively as a garnish.

Cumin (*Jeera*)
Dried seeds, white or black, resembling caraway supply a nutty flavour and powerful scent. Used whole or ground in a wide range of Indian food, this is one of the most important of all Indian spices.

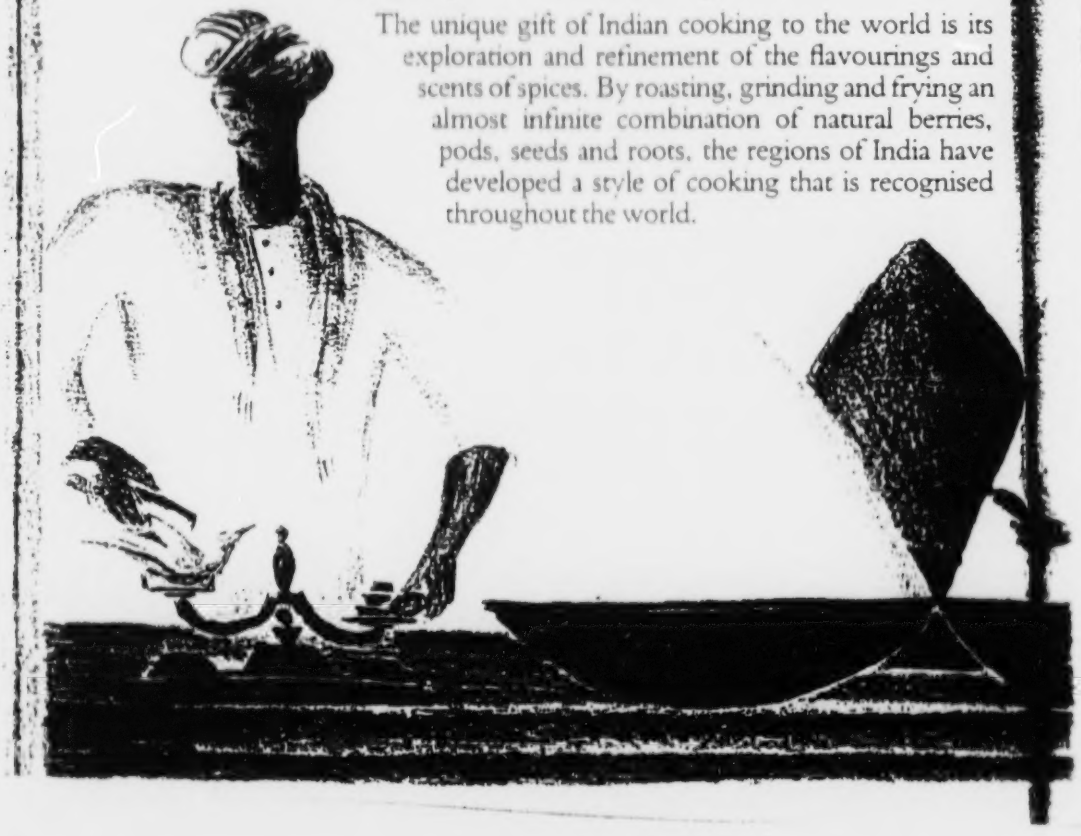
Fennel (*Saunf*)
The green seeds with sweet aniseed flavour and light scent, are used whole or ground in meat, rice and vegetable dishes.

Fenugreek (*Methi*)
The seeds provide a bitter flavour and powerful scent and are used whole or ground in vegetable and lentil dishes. Fenugreek is also used as a fresh herb.

Alongside the rich influences of climate and conquest, the religions of India have also determined the development of Indian food. Powerful taboos on what may or may not be eaten have been set down and practised for centuries by millions of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jainists and Sikhs and even the minority religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism have contributed different and interesting cooking styles. Hindus and Sikhs do not eat beef, Muslims and Jews do not eat pork, Brahmins and Jains among Hindus are vegetarians of the strictest kind and do not eat fish or eggs either. Some will not eat red foods such as tomatoes, because of the resemblance of flesh. Others will not eat garlic or onions because they are strong flavours thought to inflame passions. Like all prohibitions, this has only served to increase the ingenuity of cooks.

Indian spices and basic ingredients

The unique gift of Indian cooking to the world is its exploration and refinement of the flavourings and scents of spices. By roasting, grinding and frying an almost infinite combination of natural berries, pods, seeds and roots, the regions of India have developed a style of cooking that is recognised throughout the world.



Goan Fish Curry

Goan Machi

All along the Konkan coast, a variety of fish and shellfish are cooked in a hot sweet and sour coconut sauce. 'Kokum' fruit is used with tamarind to produce a sour effect, but the curry can be made successfully with limes or lemons as a replacement. I find the flavour improved if the fish is prepared a day in advance.

750g / 1¾lb firm white fish fillets
5ml / 1 tsp turmeric
salt
30ml / 2 tsp lemon juice
3 dried hot red chilli peppers
5ml / 1 tsp cumin seed
30ml / 2 tbsp coriander seeds
5ml / 1 tsp black peppercorns
6 cloves garlic
3cm / 1¼ inch piece peeled fresh root ginger
250g / 9oz (2½ cups) freshly grated coconut
1 large onion
30ml / 2 tbsp vegetable oil
150ml / 5fl oz tamarind juice (see page 13)
5 *kokums* or chopped flesh from ½ lime or lemon
200g / 7oz peeled tomatoes
3 fresh hot green chilli peppers

Sprinkle the fish fillets with the turmeric, a little salt and the lemon juice. Leave for several hours.

Grind the seeded red chilli peppers, cumin and coriander seeds and peppercorns to a fine powder, then work with the garlic, ginger and coconut in a food processor to form a smooth paste. Chop the onion and fry in the heated oil until golden brown. Add the spice paste and cook gently for 10 minutes. Pour in 1 litre/1¼ pints (1 quart) of boiling water and simmer for 20 minutes.

Now put in the fish and its liquid, together with the tamarind juice and the *kokums*. Cook gently for 10 minutes. Just at the very end, add the chopped tomatoes and seeded green chilli peppers.

Parsi Lamb with Straw Potatoes

Sali Ma Gosht

This Parsi recipe was cooked for me in Delhi by Mrs. Bhicoo Maneckshaw, a whirlwind of energy and enthusiasm, who has written cookery books, planned VIP menus for Indian Airlines and taught Indira Ghandhi's daughters-in-law to cook.

800g / 1¾lb boned lean lamb from the leg, cubed
500g / 1lb 2oz potatoes
salt
45ml / 3 tbsp vegetable oil
2 large onions
4 cloves
4cm / 1½ inch piece cinnamon stick
5 whole green cardamom pods
7.5ml / 1½ tsp turmeric
7.5ml / 1½ tsp ground cumin
4 cloves garlic
3cm / 1¼ inch piece fresh root ginger
oil for deep frying

Cut the peeled potatoes into very thin sticks and rinse in several changes of cold water. Put the potatoes in a bowl of salted ice-cold water and chill in the refrigerator while you cook the meat.

Heat the oil and cook the sliced onions with the cloves, cinnamon and cardamom pods until the onions are brown. Now add 5ml / 2 tsp water with the turmeric, cumin and finely chopped garlic and ginger. Simmer for 5 minutes, adding a little more water if the mixture seems too dry. Now stir in the meat pieces with 250 / 8fl oz water and salt to taste. Cover and cook until the meat is tender. Only a thick sauce should remain.

To make the straw potatoes, take a handful at a time, squeeze well and dry in a tea (dish) towel. Deep fry, using a skewer to keep the straws separate. Drain on kitchen paper.

Turn the meat on to a serving dish and top with the crisp straw potatoes.

Kashmiri Meat Balls

Goolar Kebab

These small, tasty meat balls are named after the Indian wild fig, the goolar.

500g / 1lb 2oz lean minced (ground) lamb
75g / 3oz (⅓ cup) yellow split peas (*channa dal*)
30g / 1¼oz (3 tbsp) onion
15ml / 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh root ginger
6 whole green cardamom pods
6 cloves
4cm / 1½ inch stick cinnamon
2 bay leaves
3 eggs
salt
30ml / 2 tbsp white poppy seeds
vegetable oil for deep frying

Filling
30g / 1¼oz (⅔ cup) fresh mint leaves
30g / 1¼oz (⅔ cup) fresh coriander leaves
4 fresh hot green chilli peppers
50g / 2oz (⅓ cup) raisins
30ml / 2 tbsp mixed grated orange and lemon rind
salt

Wash the *channa dal* and put it in a saucepan with the lamb, chopped onion, ginger, spices and bay leaves. Add 500ml / 16fl oz of water and bring to the boil. Simmer gently until the dal are cooked, then turn up the heat and let the remaining water evaporate so that the mixture is completely dry. Remove the spices and bay leaves and work in a food processor to a smooth paste. Beat 2 of the eggs into the mixture and add salt to taste. Put the paste into the refrigerator to become firm while you are preparing the filling.

Chop the mint and coriander and work to a coarse paste in a food processor with the seeded chilli peppers, raisins and rind. Salt to taste. Divide the filling into 20 portions, and do the same with the lamb mixture. Roll the lamb mixture into balls, then flatten one in your palm, using your thumb to make a dent in the middle. Push a ball of the filling into the dent, then mould the meat around it and shape into a ball again. If the mixture gets too sticky, wet your hands when moulding the balls.

Beat the remaining egg. Roll each completed ball in egg and then in poppy seeds to coat all over. Chill for at least half an hour, then deep fry in batches in hot oil until golden brown on all sides. Drain on kitchen paper and serve hot or cold.

Activity Six
The Culture of Appearance

One aspect of wearing the sari has remained constant through time: the tucked in pleats. Sanskrit literature from the Vedic period insists that pleats are absolutely necessary for a woman to be truly a woman. These pleats must be tucked in at the waist so that the wind god, Vayu, can whisk away any evil influence that may strike the woman in the stomach or reproductive organs. The brilliant colors of the sari are also partially ruled by custom. Colors are held to represent moods. Yellow, green and red are festive and auspicious colors which stand for fertility. Red, which also evokes passion is a bridal color and is associated with pregnancy rituals. Pale cream is soothing in the summer and represents bridal purity. A married Hindu woman will not wear a completely white sari. It is only for widows: life without a husband is life without color. Black alone brings misfortune and so must be mixed with another color. Blue evokes the life giving force of the monsoon and visions of the God Krishna.

1. What are the common elements of the sari throughout India?

2. What fashion customs does your culture have?

3. What other adornments do Indian women wear? Do we have parallel in our culture?

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Hold a fashion show which showcases some of the important aspects of Indian clothing.

Activity One: The Culture of the Monsoon
Individual Report

Why does the monsoon bind the people of India together?

Activity Two: Musical Culture
Individual Report

Compare and contrast Indian music to Western music.

Activity Five: The Culture of Cuisine
Individual Report

Choose a recipe which you feel uniquely expresses your heritage and connection to your family and culture. Copy the recipe and clearly explain why you chose this particular recipe.